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December 5, 2007

72-cv-61041

Honorable Jack Weinstein
United States District Court
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, NY 11201

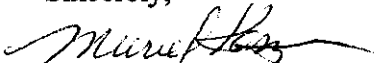
Dear Judge Weinstein,

We are writing to thank you for your role in the original creation of Mark Twain J.H.S for the Gifted and Talented and to urge you to support the spirit of the school as it was originally intended.

We know that the Department of Education (DOE) has requested that the original court order which established Mark Twain as a charter school be lifted. The original court order states that "...students with CSD 21 should receive a first priority for admission to the new school. Moreover, with CSD 21, students from Coney Island should be at the head of the list, so long as such preferences do not override the goal of a racially balanced student body." It is clearly the intent of the order to give local students a preference first, with the racial balance to be used as a limiting factor only. The DOE is now trying to subvert that intent by claiming that they need to remove the preference for Coney Island and district 21 applicants in order to achieve balance, without first trying to achieve balance with local students, thereby truly eliminating a local school from the very neighborhood that surrounds it. The actual racial balance of the Coney Island area has not substantially changed since the time of the original order, and there is no reason to claim racial balance as any excuse to change now.

Mark Twain, as a school for the gifted and talented, has been a priceless asset for all of the students that has passed through its halls, but it should not be forgotten that as a result of its formation, the neighborhood that it lives in has lost its local school. That school was intended, and should still remain, a first choice for all qualified students within that neighborhood. We hope that you will honor that intent, and maintain that preference for all qualified local applicants. Please consider leaving the court order in place, which will allow Mark Twain to continue to be a school for the gifted and talented.

Sincerely,



Muriel Kerzer
Representative of Concerned Parents of District 21
concernedparents21@gmail.com